

## **Local families to benefit from farmer's market grant**

The province has provided \$750,000 to the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets to expand the association's Market Nutrition and Coupon Project.

Some 50 families in Kelowna will benefit from the grant, said Kelowna-Lake Country Liberal MLA Al Horning.

Province-wide the program will give about 2,000 low-income families, including 2,500 children, better access to local, nutritious food over the next two years.

"Congratulations to Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market for being selected to participate in this unique community-based project for a second year," said Horning.

"This project was very successful last year, bringing fresh, locally grown food to the dinner tables of Kelowna families.

"It is a great example of how we can combine our goals of supporting local producers and reducing our green house gas emissions."

This innovative 17 week project—the first of its kind in Canada—provides \$15 per week in coupons to low-income families that will be used to buy any of the fresh produce, herbs, meats, eggs or other local unprepared foods typically found at farmers' markets. Eligible families will be identified by a non-profit organization in each community and coupons will be distributed on a weekly basis.

"The coupon program has helped so many low income families and single moms," said Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market manager Bob Callioux.

"I was told by many couples that they were eating much healthier since the coupon program started last year.

"Many low income families had never been to a farmers market and farmers have seen a rise in sales from the coupons on a weekly basis."

"Providing the coupons and educating the families about the foods is a win-win situation," added Anima Anand, coordinator of Healthy Children Initiatives.

"It provides families with food security while expanding their awareness and capacity about growing and using locally grown, fresh and nutritious foods in meal preparation at home."

The Farmers' Market Nutrition and Coupon Project has a cooking and skill-building component.

The Healthy Children Initiatives Parent Support Groups will work with participating low-income families to develop knowledge and skill in the preparation of healthy, nutritious meals using fresh food.

The B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets is delivering the coupon project in 10 communities in 2008, expanding to 20 communities in 2009.

The association was founded in 2000 to promote networking and communication between farmers' markets in British Columbia.

The Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market runs Wednesday and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. both days, at Dilworth and Springfield and Thursdays, 4 to 8 p.m., in Kelowna's downtown core across from Prospera Place.